

SCHOOL ACTION STEPS FOR PANDEMIC FLU

The following is a chronological list of important step-by-step actions schools should take before, during and after a pandemic flu outbreak. Pandemic flu can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.

PRIOR TO OUTBREAK/PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING PHASE

- Create a pandemic flu plan. (Use the CDC School Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist and Flow Chart in this section of the binder)
- Work with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials. They may want to use the schools as a way to disseminate information to families. You can begin with Parent Letter #1 in the Parent section of this binder.
- Decide the roles and responsibilities of school staff (including all ancillary staff) to prevent the spread of flu.
- Train nurses and staff in flu-symptom recognition. (See surveillance section of this binder). Remember that a person who is infected does not show symptoms right away. But children who are getting ill may show different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.
- Insure that standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented. (See surveillance section of this binder)
- Improve the hygiene of students and staff. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of flu by “cough and sneeze etiquette,” clean hands, and clean work areas. (See public information section of this binder for posters)
- Determine whether the school should be cleaned differently or more often.
- Decide to what extent you will encourage or require children and staff to stay home when they are mildly ill.
- Identify students who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.)
- Review the health needs of students. Some students may have a greater risk of infections. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.
- Develop alternative learning strategies such as collaborative agreements with television networks or other local cable stations, teleconferencing, lessons on CDs.
- Educate staff, students and parents about: the differences between seasonal flu, bird flu and pandemic flu; best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of flu; what could occur in a pandemic. (Use the information in the public information section of this binder)

Outbreak of Flu Disease

LESS THAN 10% STUDENTS

- Begin Heightened Surveillance Reporting
- Send out Parent Letter #3 Initial Outbreak, informing parents that some students are sick but schools remain open, include tip sheets and info resource list*
- Work with Springfield/Greene County Health Department regarding a Press Release A announcing schools remain open but parents need to prepare/Use key messages A*
- Post flu prevention signs on campus

Expansion of the Outbreak

10% OR MORE OF STUDENTS ILL (but less than 30%)

- Begin Intensive Surveillance Reporting
- Send Parent Letter #4 Expanded Outbreak, include prevention tip sheets, etc.

Continued Expansion of the Outbreak

MORE THAN 30% OF STUDENTS ILL

- Greene County Health Officer issues Declaration and press release closing school(s)
- Close school
- Send out Parent Letter #5 School Closure, announcing closure(s)
- Cancel any non-academic events

Following the Outbreak

- Springfield/Greene County Health Department issues declaration and press release that schools can open.
- Issue Parent Letter #6
- Continue communicating with local health department
- Return to heightened surveillance reporting

If students get sick again, start checklist again at Outbreak section.